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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002379

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IIP EXPRESSES OPTIMISM ON PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires David Satterfield for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The Charge met with Tariq al Hashimi, Secretary General of the Iraqi Islamic Party to continue our

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engagement with leading Sunni groups to encourage their participation in the constitutional process. The Charge expressed regret for the recent detention of party leader, Mohsin abd Hamid. Hashimi requested a written apology. He explained his party's approach to the on-going efforts to include Sunnis in the drafting of the constitution and appeared optimistic. He also described the decentralized structure of the IIP, which is the most prominent Sunni political party in Iraq. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Charge opened by expressing regret for the detention of Muhsin abd al Hamid, leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) on May 30. He noted the USG had acted immediately to release abd al Hamid, a former Governing Council member and well-known member of the anti-Saddam resistance. Tariq al Hashimi, General Secretary of IIP, accompanied by Nasir al Ani, said the USG cannot guarantee that such incidents will not be repeated. He continued to demand a written letter of apology, stating that the rate and breadth of detentions are "overwhelming" the Sunni. Hashimi claimed Sunnis interpret detentions, whether by Coalition or Iraqi Forces as a message that "the U.S. is looking to get the Sunni."

¶3. (C) Hashimi reaffirmed the Iraqi Islamic Party's commitment to friendship with the U.S. He said that some in the party believe the Americans see the party as connected to the insurgency. Hashimi asked the USG to present any such evidence, so that the IIP would have a chance to refute it. He denied the existence of any element in the party abetting the armed Iraqi resistance. Hashimi admitted that the current situation is extremely tense for Sunnis. He emphasized the "insurgents are killing us before they kill you."

¶4. (C) Hashimi appeared optimistic about the June 2 joint meeting of various Sunni political groups and the Transitional National Assembly's Constitutional Drafting committee. While he postulated that the process of recruiting professional and representative Sunnis could be best expedited by allowing IIP to represent the entire community, Hashimi said the IIP had prepared a list for submission. On a more realistic note, the General Secretary recognized that the IIP may not see all its candidates selected for the expanded Drafting Committee. More important to his constituents, Hashimi claimed, was how the committee's input would be incorporated into the process. He warned that the TNA must not simply treat the newly created body as consultants, but the appointed members' contributions should be weighed equally with the legally elected TNA representatives. The Charge agreed that the process needed to be inclusive of credible, moderate Sunni representatives and that they should be chosen as soon as possible

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¶5. (C) Yet Hashimi noted the IIP was "willing to sacrifice itself" to hold to the deadline of August 15 for drafting the constitution. He gave a brief overview of his party's organization, noting policy was set in Baghdad, but regional offices were allowed a fair amount of freedom, which he described as "decentralization."

¶6. (C) Comment. Considering the flap over Mohsin abd Hamid's detainment, Hashimi was very engaging and optimistic about the effort to include the Sunnis into the next stage of the political process. It was interesting to hear him describe the structure of the most prominent Sunni political party as decentralized, which was evidenced by the January 30 elections. Diyala provincial IIP leadership petitioned the IIP for exemption to the national IIP's declared boycott of the January 30 elections, and received permission. Anbar's IIP also participated, as did Ninewa's and all three seated IIP members in their respective Provincial Councils.

¶7. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, RE MSUL and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.
Satterfield